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News Release ~ Communiqué

Ministers announce opening of Commonwealth Centre for Sport Development

VICTORIA, January 18, 1995 The Commonwealth Centre for Sport Development (CCSD) was officially opened today by the Minister of Canadian Heritage, the Honourable Michel Dupuy, and British Columbia's Sport Minister, Mr. Robin Blencoe.

The Centre is located at the Saanich Commonwealth Place complex, the aquatics sport venue for the 1994 Commonwealth Games. The CCSD will provide a comprehensive range of programs and services to assist Canadian high-performance athletes at future Olympic and Paralympic and other international competitions. It will provide support in such areas as athlete counselling, coaching and coaching development, sport science and sport medicine.

« One of the major objectives of the federal government's participation in the 1994 Commonwealth Games was to create a legacy for high-performance sport, » said Mr. Dupuy. « As part of our original \$62 million contribution to the Games, the government committed \$10 million toward the CCSD. These funds have been used to establish a Legacy Fund, the proceeds of which support the programs and services of the CCSD. This centre represents part of our commitment to ensuring a lasting legacy for high-performance sport at the international, national, provincial and community levels, » he added.

Mr. Blencoe said the province's goal is to create the best sports development system in Canada here in British Columbia. « The CCSD will serve as a flagship for B.C.'s regional sport delivery network. With our regional multi-sport centres, we will be supporting athletes at the local level, moving them through the development levels easier and faster and, in partnership with the CCSD, developing the best athletes into national and international champions, » he said.

The opening of the centre will make Victoria the national, multi- sport, high-performance training centre for summer sports, just as Calgary is the high-performance training centre for winter sports.

« Our goal is to create an environment in which Canadian athletes and coaches can pursue their dreams in as close to optimal conditions as possible, » said Mr. Ken Shields, president of the CCSD. « Our challenge is to create real partnerships at the national, provincial and community levels within sport, government, business and educational agencies. We are committed to creating a "team" approach to achieving our goals -- to help Canadians excel and to improve Canadian sport, » he said.

Ministers Dupuy and Blencoe also announced the appointment of four members to the CCSD executive board : Ken Shields, former national coach for basketball; Bill Thomson, director of the National Coaching Institute based at the University of Victoria; Marion Lay, former athlete and director of Promotion Plus, an organization to promote gender equity in sports; and Sue Neill, deputy director general of Sport Canada. This executive will appoint six additional members at large which will include a coach and an athlete.

Information :

Shelby Chamberlain
Canadian Heritage
(604) 666-6426

Mike Hughes

British Columbia
Ministry of Government Services
(604) 356-8344

Marilyn Henderson
CCSD
(604) 744-3583

Alain Garceau
Press Secretary
Office of Minister Dupuy
(819) 997-7788
